

ISTHMIAN EXPANSION

THE Rothmans Isthmian League's sub-committee meets this week to consider applications from over 30 clubs wishing to enter their competition next season and although their hopes of attracting top class non-league sides appear to have failed, they look certain to go ahead with their expansion plans.

In some ways this could be a bad thing for this grade of football and one authority has called it "legalised piracy".

Mr Barry East, progressive chairman of the Isthmian League, boldly stated recently that "The present set-up blights the ambition of clubs who can see no way of breaking into big

time soccer. It does little to stimulate the enthusiasm of supporters who are expected to count their blessings and go on watching the same teams in the same leagues year after year.

"We must accept that a percentage of clubs, spectators and administrators want to keep it that way but I believe, that the more ambitious majority among leading clubs should be given their chance of climbing just as far as their talent and enterprise can take them."

"Strong regional leagues with the ultimate aim of a pyramid of football topped by the Football League still seems the best answer but achieving it will be very

difficult because of the self interest and entrenched attitudes of many Leagues and their administrators. Unless clubs, leagues and administrators are prepared to put the good of the game above their own interest, there is little real hope of the progressive pyramid football becoming a reality."

The climate is right for the Isthmians to do something about this at their own level, the flood of applications produced by their announcement of expansion has proved it. Let them form their own southern counties pyramid. There are the Athenians, Hellenic, Hampshire, London Spartan, Surrey Senior, Sussex County,

Magnet and Planet Eastern counties and the Kent League all operating around London. Why not have a get-together with the competitions' officials and see what can be done?

ROTHMANS ISTHMIAN LEAGUE DIVISION ONE

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Wycombe	20	11	4	5	32	20	37
Dagenham	17	10	4	3	31	18	34
Hitchin	16	10	3	3	21	14	33
Tooting	19	9	4	6	40	35	31
Leatherhead	18	9	2	7	25	17	29
Bishops S.	17	8	2	7	26	21	26
Sutton	16	7	4	5	24	22	25
Leytonstone	15	7	3	5	23	18	24
Slough	14	7	3	4	18	14	24
Enfield	12	6	4	2	14	12	22
Hendon	17	6	2	9	22	25	20
Waltham	16	6	2	8	20	24	20
Woking	13	5	3	5	18	15	18
Croydon	12	5	3	4	14	13	18
Southall	15	5	3	7	26	26	18
Hayes	16	5	3	8	16	22	18
Tilbury	14	5	2	7	11	16	17
Staines	13	4	4	5	13	14	16
Dulwich	14	3	4	7	16	21	13
Barking	13	4	1	8	13	25	10
Kingstonian	14	2	4	8	13	25	10
Ilford	17	1	4	12	6	30	7